(b) if so, what additional facilities are now available to the air passengers at the airport; and

(c) if not, by when the work is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (c) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has developed Nagpur airport as model airport for limited international operations. AAI has constructed a New Terminal Building with all modern passenger facilities at an estimated cost of Rs. 8.87 crores and commissioned it in April, 1996. This terminal can accommodate 700 passengers. The runway resurfacing has also been completed at a cost of Rs. 4.14 crores.

Closure of Srinagar Airport for upgradation

2924. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Sirnagar Airport has been closed for Upgradation; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to solve the difficulties of passengers and tourists arriving from abroad for visit to Kashmir?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Srinagar airport which belongs to Indian Air Force (IAF) has been temporarily closed for flight operations from 8.6.98 for recarpeting of the runway. Civil flights are being operated from Awantipore Air Force Station. Airports Authority of India and IAF have provided all necessary passenger facilities at Awantipore Air Force Station.

Financial help from European Consortium of Banks for aircraft acquisition

2925. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the sanctions have hit Indian Airlines' plan to raise $100 million from a European Consortium of banks for aircraft acquisition;

(b) what was the estimate of original purchase cost and how much Indian Airlines will have to shell out now for making an initial payment; and

(c) in what manner Indian Airlines propose to raise the required money for buying aircraft indicating budgetary provision made in current year's budget?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Indian Airlines, at present, has no proposal for raising USD 100 million from any European Consortium of Banks for aircraft acquisition.

(b) and (c) Indian Airlines, presently have a proposal to acquire six 50 seater aircraft. The estimated cost for the acquisition of these six 50 seater aircraft is about Rs. 450 cores. Amount to be paid as initial payment will be decided at the time of negotiations.

In the Capital Budget Estimates of the Company for the year 1998-99, an amount of Rs. 35 crores has been provided for making advance payment towards the proposed induction of six 50 seater aircraft. The project for the acquisition of six 50 seater aircraft is proposed to be financed through External Commerical Borrowings.

Renaming the New Cochin Airport

2926. SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representation to name the new airport in Cochin (nedumbassrry) after Adi Shankaracharya, whose birth place Kalady is near to the airport; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereon?